

## **Recommended Procedures for Evidence Collection by Health Care Providers in Sexual Assault Cases**

As required by Sec. 703 of Public Act 51 of 2001, the Michigan Department of State Police, in conjunction with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, has developed recommendations for the collection of physical evidence by health care providers in sexual assault cases.

It is recommended that the protocol developed by the Michigan Sexual Assault Protocol Committee as described in their report, ***Standard Recommended Procedures for the Emergency Treatment of Sexual Assault Victims***, be followed. This report in its entirety follows, however, sections pertinent to evidence collection have been linked on this page; click on any blue wording for additional information contained in the report.

The report states "By necessity, the job of collecting physical evidence in sexual assault cases has fallen to **physicians and nurses in hospital emergency departments and pediatric units**. The role of medical personnel in this process often can be the key to successful prosecution and can help to promote early victim recovery." Health care professionals should thoroughly document **findings** from the physical exam.

The **packaging** and **preserving the integrity of evidence** as well as procedures for the **release of evidence** is outlined in the above referenced report. In addition the report includes various aspects of evidence collection such as **clothing, swabs and smears, bite mark, hair, and whole blood**.

Evidence should be collected using the Michigan State Police Sexual Assault Evidence Collection kit recommended in **Attachment E** of the above referenced document. These kits are available, free of charge, from Shelter House, P.O. Box 2289, Midland, Michigan, 48640.

The collection kits described in the above titled document have been available at Detroit Receiving Hospital for the past several years. To further enhance the collection program, the **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) program**, which functions throughout most of the state, has become active in Wayne County.